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David Rosenberger Promoted to Professor

by John Zakour

Highland, NY - Dave Rosenberger, Superintendent of the Hudson Valley Laboratory, has been promoted to Cornell University Professor of Plant Pathology at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, NY. His promotion is effective July 1, 1998.

"Dave Rosenberger has the rare ability to diagnose and identify practical solutions to disease problems using his knowledge and understanding of biological processes and host/pathogen interactions. He is highly respected by his peers and is considered by many to be the most knowledgeable plant pathologist in the country in the area of postharvest and summer diseases of apples," said Helene Dillard, chairperson of the Plant Pathology department in Geneva. "On the personal side, what I value and appreciate most about Dave is that he is a very thorough and thoughtful individual, and a superb team player."



David Rosenberger examines a cedar for cedar apple rust.
PHOTO: Rob Way, Cornell Univ.

Rosenberger's general field of specialty is diagnosis and control of diseases of tree fruits. He considers himself to be a generalist in plant pathology with the ability to address a broad range of applied problems and to translate results of scientific research into cost-effective disease-management programs for fruit growers. His research has included work on nematodes, viruses, and fungal pathogens of apples, pears, peaches, and plums. In apple, he has addressed disease problems that occur in the field as well as postharvest diseases of apples in storage, and he attempts to look for the best ways to combine fungicides with cultural and other management practices in order to minimize the costs of disease control programs while also reducing losses to diseases.

"To prosper at a small field station, one must be a generalist within one's own discipline and also become knowledgeable in related disciplines," said Rosenberger, whose responsibilities are 50% research, 30% extension and 20% administration. "The challenge to stay broadly knowledgeable across a variety of disciplines has proven to be a great stimulus and is one of the reasons that I love my job. I can't imagine ever becoming bored with life while working at a field station!"

Rosenberger considers his development of effective working relationships with a broad range of individuals and institutions to be among his most important accomplishments. He has been actively

involved in four different USDA regional research projects, in one multi-state SARE project, and in a national NAPIAP assessment of pesticide use on apples. The SARE project focused on field evaluations of scab-resistant apple cultivars and development of other sustainable management practices for apples in the northeast. It involved a five-state consortium of horticulturists, entomologists, economists, plant pathologists, and cooperative extension specialists who investigated the benefits and limitations of using genetic resistance to diseases as primary components for apple production systems that would be less dependent on pesticides. "Results from this project helped fruit growers avoid some of the many pitfalls associated with adoption of new management systems in a perennial crop such as apples," Rosenberger said.

Since Rosenberger became Superintendent in 1991, Hudson Valley now has 20 acres of research orchards, new pesticide storage and waste-water management facilities, new walk-in cold rooms, enlarged greenhouses, and re-equipped laboratories. Rosenberger credits these changes to support from the Hudson Valley fruit industry and from Director Jim Hunter. Support of co-workers was also important. "At a field station our size, nothing happens unless the scientists and program leaders become personally involved and all cooperate in the process," he said. In addition, Rosenberger acknowledges the cooperation and support provided by colleagues in Geneva and Ithaca whom he calls, "some of the very best agricultural scientists in the world," and a dedicated Hudson Valley support staff.

In the future, Rosenberger sees the Hudson Valley Lab as continuing its role as part of a research and extension network essential for maintaining healthy agricultural industries within New York State. He anticipates his research over the next 10 years will involve work with some of the new fungicides that are currently under development as well as research on non-chemical controls that may become increasingly important as alternatives to chemical fungicides.

Rosenberger's web page is at <http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/pp/faculty/rosenberger/>

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Suggested caption: David Rosenberger examines a cedar for cedar apple rust.

Contact: Linda McCandless, Communications Services

Telephone: (315) 787-2417

e-mail: llm3@cornell.edu

Return to [News](#) Page

